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SUBJECT: NARCOTICS CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR 2004

Ref: A. 03 Hanoi 1549 B. 03 Hanoi 3288 C. 03 Hanoi 1885 D.  
03 Hanoi 1504 E. 03 Hanoi 1043 F. 03 Hanoi 0353 G. 03 Hanoi  
0549 H. 03 Hanoi 3550 I. 03 Hanoi 3156

1. (U) In response to incoming request, post is providing responses keyed to 2004 certification instruction points as follow:

2. (U) Implementation of the counternarcotics Master Plan for 2001-2005:

--This is an ongoing activity that continues to make slow but steady progress. The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continues its support with a USD 276,000 project designed to help the GVN finalize the plan (which now is extended to 2010). The USG is contributing USD 100,000 to the project. According to Bui Xuan Hieu, Section Chief, Vietnam Standing Office for Drug Control (SODC), the plan now is in the Office of the Government (Prime Minister's office) waiting for approval. Approval should be forthcoming "soon."

3. (U) Continued focus on narcotics-related corruption, including policy statements that make it clear that narcotics-related corruption will not be tolerated and will be severely punished, including the removal and prosecution of corrupt officials, when found:

--The UN, law enforcement agencies, and even the GVN view corruption in Vietnam as an endemic problem that exists at all levels and in all sectors. In its public statements, the GVN takes a strong stand against corruption in general, but has not singled out narcotics-related corruption for specific attention. Colonel Bui Xuan Bien, SODC director, confirmed that "any GVN official who violates laws about corruption" would be prosecuted. In addition to the Nam Cam case in 2003 (ref A), there have recently been a number of other corruption cases. In a March 2004 case, 26 Lang Son provincial customs officials were sentenced to between 2 and 18 years in prison for taking bribes at Tan Thanh International Border Gate in Lang Son Province. The offenders were charged with extorting more than USD 280,000 between June 2000 and June 2001 by falsifying customs documents claiming VAT refunds on non-existent exported goods. Vietnam's state-controlled media also gave prominent coverage to the La Thi Kim Oanh Case (ref I). Oanh, a former official of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, was sentenced to death for misappropriating USD 4.9 million and causing a loss of USD 2.2 million to the state budget; two vice Ministers were found guilty of related charges, although their sentences were suspended upon appeal. In a drug-related corruption case, during a court trial in Ho Chi Minh City in January, former police major Nguyen Cong Trieu of the Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) Police's Investigation Division was given an eight year sentence for taking bribes and fined USD 2,500, while former lawyer Phan Van Hai was sentenced to three years in prison for acting as a middleman for bribes, and fined USD 2,000;

--Senior GVN officials continue to speak out against corruption. In January, Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) General Secretary Nong Duc Manh said during the opening of the Party Central Committee's ninth plenum that the CPV would "clarify the causes of success and failure through specific reviews while seeking ways to intensify the combat against corruption, wasteful spending and bureaucracy." At a meeting in Hanoi on April 14, 2004 to review the execution of the Politburo's resolution on key judicial tasks, President Tran Duc Luong called for further judicial reform to bolster the fight against crime including corruption. In December 2003, Prime Minister Phan Van Khai confirmed during the closing session of a ministerial meeting in HCMC that administrative reform and the fight against corruption were crucial issues that must be addressed in 2004. During a meeting in Hanoi in March, Phan Dien, Member of the CPV's Politburo and Standing member of its Secretariat, claimed that Vietnam had "deterred corruption although not completely stopped it." Phan Dien admitted that combating corruption is key to economic renovation. Before the People's Councils elections took place in April, Pham The Duet, President of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, said that Vietnam planned to use the election to find "new blood" to combat corruption, and that the election "should help develop a better state management system to fight

corruption." At the international level, in December 2003, Vietnam joined 94 other countries in signing the UN Convention against Corruption at the international conference in Merida, Mexico;

--A bilateral anti-corruption agreement with Sweden, providing about USD 2.7 million to fund research on socio-economic policy and anti-corruption measures over a three-year period, was signed in 2002. Under the agreement, Sweden is supporting a study on the "institutional framework of anti-corruption policies." While the official agreement is with the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the actual partner is the CPV.

14. (U) Developing and implementing regulations enabling the tools provided in the new counternarcotics law to be used fully and effectively to investigate major drug-trafficking groups:

--The National Assembly passed a comprehensive counternarcotics law on December 9, 2000, which came into effect on June 1, 2001. The GVN directed Ministry of Public Security (MPS) and other ministries, including the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), to agree on a common approach for implementation. In addition, MOJ was tasked with working with MPS and other relevant agencies to review existing counternarcotics legal documents and make appropriate amendments to facilitate implementation of the new law. According to Dr. Doris Buddenberg, UNODC Resident Representative, UNODC is assisting the GVN in an "ad hoc" manner in this area, especially concerning implementing decrees and legal training. There is now a donor coordination group consisting of Sweden, Denmark, and the USAID-funded Support for Trade Acceleration (STAR) project that meets once a month to discuss legal issues; however, the focus is not specifically on narcotics;

--Between 1953 and 2004, Vietnam passed more than 70 decrees and legal documents concerning drug issues. More recently, the GVN has made public eight decrees related to the counternarcotics law. These decrees:

- a. list the narcotic substances and precursor chemicals;
- b. guide the control of lawful drug-related activities in Vietnam;
- c. stipulate the rehabilitation order, procedures, and regimes for drug addicts assigned to compulsory rehabilitation centers;
- d. designate "family organization" and "community-based" rehabilitation;
- e. prescribe the regime of compensation and allowances for individuals, families, agencies, and organizations suffering life, health, and property damage while participating in drug prevention activities;
- f. stipulate the rewards and commendations for individuals, families, agencies, and organizations recording achievements in drug prevention;
- g. assign responsibility on international cooperation in the field of drug prevention. (Note: According to DEA's Hanoi Country Office, this decree contains no concrete formulation for creating a framework to allow for information sharing and/or cooperative law enforcement efforts. The decree also does not provide implementing regulations for international controlled deliveries, which is mentioned in the 2001 drug law); and,
- h. Regulate the management of private treatment centers and stipulate conditions and procedures to grant and revoke working licenses for such centers.

According to SODC, the GVN will issue at least two other decrees this year to guide the implementation of the Drug Law. These decrees concern regulations on precursor control, and assignment of specific tasks to different ministries and other organizations;

--An eighth (and key) decree, concerning law enforcement, has apparently been issued, but according to an MPS official, it has not been made public due to its "sensitivity." According to DEA, without knowing what is in this decree and/or without access to MPS officers, DEA (and other foreign law enforcement entities) are unable to know what law enforcement training would be most useful;

--A preliminary analysis by a UNODC legal official concluded that the decrees are "insufficient in terms of establishing a proper drug control legal system." The decrees tend to focus on drug control areas, which are "generally less complex and controversial," the official added. There is still a need for "new and proper" legal instruments in areas such as procedures, conditions, systems for investigations, international cooperation, extradition, controlled delivery, and maritime cooperation, according to the analysis;

--Another problem is Vietnam's lack of judicial capacity. UNODC's Dr. Buddenberg lamented that this issue is "still not adequately addressed" by the donor community. Without improved judicial capacity, concrete progress in this area

"will be difficult," she opined;

--While not directly related to the drug law, on May 29, 2003, the GVN issued Decree 58, which deals with the control of import, export, and transit of drug substances, precursors, additive drugs, and psychotropic substances. According to the decree, only businesses authorized by the Ministries of Health, Industry, and Public Security can import/export drug substances, precursors, additive drugs and psychotropic substances for specific, licit purposes. The GVN has tasked MPS to coordinate with other concerned ministries and agencies to manage and control the import/export of these narcotic substances;

--While the counternarcotics law allows for law enforcement techniques such as controlled deliveries, the GVN appears reluctant to engage in this area and/or meaningfully cooperate with DEA's Hanoi Country Office or other law enforcement entities in Hanoi. DEA has informed MPS' counternarcotics unit (C-17) about several major heroin shipments transiting Vietnam. C-17 officials did not noticeably respond or react to the DEA-provided information, or at least did not share information about its follow-up. According to DEA, implementing controlled delivery techniques could have resulted in major seizures. MPS has declined to accept DEA offers to fund operations. Furthermore, MPS continues to maintain that it is unable to share operational information with DEA due to "national security considerations" (ref B).

15. (U) Increased seizures of opium, heroin, and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), followed by increased investigations and prosecutions of traffickers:

--The GVN continued to arrest and prosecute drug traffickers in 2004, with an increase of cases along the Cambodian border. The total number of drug cases discovered by the Border Army in 2003 was six times higher compared to 2002. According to SODC, in 2003, there were 12,888 drug cases with 20,441 offenders arrested. The seizures include 152.1 kilograms of heroin, 280.5 kilograms of opium, 734.5 kilograms of cannabis, 59,771 doses of unspecified drugs, 27,128 ATS pills, 236,830 tablets and ampoules. However, in the first three months of 2004 compared to the same period in 2003, there was a decline of 749 cases (24.6 percent), 528 offenders (14.2 percent), but 650 percent increase in the amount of heroin seized (58.5/8.95 kilograms), and a 520 percent increase in the amount of synthetic drugs seized (10,872/2,090 pills). Recently, Ho Chi Minh City witnessed the biggest Ecstasy case ever in Vietnam. In a trial in April, defendants were charged with trafficking 14,200 MDMA pills. However, DEA and other law enforcement entities continue to believe that most arrests involve relatively low-level street dealers;

--In terms of seizures, media reports (refs C and D) indicated a major seizure of 73 kilograms of heroin in June and July 2003. This seizure represented about 128 percent of the total amount of heroin seized in Vietnam (57.4 kilograms) during 2002. Despite this relatively impressive seizure, the UN's "Mini-Dublin" 2003 report noted that Vietnam remains a "major transit route for drug traffickers, with Vietnamese traffickers demonstrating increased sophistication in trafficking techniques and concealment." The report further stated that Vietnam is atypical in that very few drugs (at least until this recent seizure) are seized at border crossings, indicating the "inefficiency of Vietnam's border control capacity." According to an article in "An Ninh Thu Do" ("Capital Security") newspaper, there are only 50 enforcement officers in the Border Army and Sea Police forces, who are in charge of the 8,000-kilometer land border and 1 million square kilometers of territorial waters. Attempting to address this issue, UNODC (supported primarily by the USG), along with C-17, started a project in January 2004 to improve interdiction and seizure capacity within the GVN;

-- Concerning prosecutions, the GVN, according to law enforcement sources, moves fairly vigorously to prosecute those arrested. As noted above, those prosecuted are generally street-level dealers. In addition, GVN law enforcement authorities have not demonstrated the will to pursue higher-level narcotics traffickers, according to DEA;

--Vietnam's threshold for the death penalty is among the lowest in the world and drug sentences tend to be harsh. Possession of 100 grams of heroin or 20 kilograms of opium can result in the death penalty, according to SODC. Although the number of offenses subject to the death penalty has been reduced from 44 to 29 in the Revised Penal Code, in recent years, most of the death sentences were handed down on drug traffickers, according to MFA spokesman Le Dung in April 2004. According to recent press accounts, in December 2003 the Tuyen Quang Provincial People's Court handed down 7 death penalties, 5 life sentences, and an aggregate of 139 years in jail to others during a trial against 59 defendants, who were variously charged with trafficking

illicit drugs and military arms and escaping from the prison. In a prominent February 2004 case against 17 offenders, the Hanoi Appeals Court handed down death sentences to four persons, including ringleader Chu Van Hieu and life sentences to seven others. Hieu and accomplices were convicted of trafficking 307 kilograms of opium and 14.6 kilograms of heroin. In another case, the HCMC People's Court opened a trial in February against two leaders of a major drug ring, Ngo Xuan Phuong and Ngo Duc Minh, along with other 11 ring members. The gang had organized transnational trafficking of over USD 1 million worth of heroin, cannabis and ATS between Vietnam and Japan, the Netherlands and UK. The offenders were charged with possession of 36 kilograms of heroin, 50 kilograms of marijuana, 15 kilograms of methamphetamine, and 6,000 ecstasy tablets. Four traffickers were sentenced to death and four others were sentenced to life in jail, according to a press report. Also in HCMC, the People's Court handed down four death sentences, eight life sentences, and other lengthy sentences in March to ring leader Chu Duc Hai and his accomplices on charges of trafficking more than 22 kilograms of heroin between August 1999 and April 2002. In Ha Tinh province, six traffickers including Duong Duc Son, Nguyen Thi Tien, Phung Mai Khoi, Chiem Van Beo, Le Tung Lam, and Nguyen Quoc Tuan received death sentences in February 2004 for trafficking 18 kilograms of heroin and 87.3 kilograms of opium;

--2003 year end statistics indicated a sharp increase in ATS and ecstasy nationwide. According to SODC, during CY 2000 - 2003, authorities seized 118,140 synthetic pills, accounting for an increase of 95,110 pills or 413 percent compared to CY 1998 - 2000. The situation in the future will be "more complicated", SODC's Col. Hieu speculated.

16. (U) Productive cooperation with regional neighbors, including Laos, the PRC, Burma, and other countries to reverse threatening trends in narcotics trafficking:

--During late 2003 and early 2004, Vietnam continued efforts in regional and international cooperation. According to press reports, a memorandum of understanding was signed during a December 16 - 18 visit to Vietnam by Gen. Viktor Cherkessov, President of Russia's State Committee on Illegal Drugs. The MOU commits the two sides to implement an earlier 1998 agreement and abide by international conventions on illicit drug trafficking. Vietnam and Russia agreed to unite in the fight against drug production and trafficking, share information and collaborate in scientific research on drugs and personnel training.

-- Also, during a December 22 - 23 trilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation among Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam was held in Hanoi under the chairmanship of General Le Hong Anh, Vietnamese Minister of Public Security and Vice Chair of NCADP. Vietnam said during the meeting that it was willing to "share experiences and exchange visits and training programs with the two neighbors." At Vietnam's initiative, a project proposal (for UNODC funding) that is to be endorsed at the next meeting in Phnom Penh will be designed to strengthen cross-border cooperation on drug control between the three countries. Delegates also agreed that the borders still remain hotspots for drug trafficking, drug abuse, and drug-related crimes. They called for stepping up information exchange to aid the fight;

-- In February, during a joint cabinet meeting between Vietnam and Thailand, Deputy Prime Minister Vu Khoan and his Thai counterpart Chavalit Yongchaiyudh discussed, among other security issues, drug cooperation. They agreed to set up a joint working committee to monitor security cooperation, including drug crimes;

-- In April, for the first time, Vietnam and China held a conference on bilateral cooperation for security and fighting crime at the border. In addition to the border and security issues, the participants discussed measures to combat drugs. Vietnam has also taken steps in the fight against the use of drugs in sports;

-- Vietnamese Minister and Chairman of Sports Committee Nguyen Danh Thai and Danish Ambassador to Vietnam Bjarne Sorensen signed the Copenhagen Declaration on Anti-Doping on April 22 in Hanoi;

-- In January, Taiwanese police informed their Vietnamese counterparts of a seizure of 44 kilograms of heroin in Kaohsiung port. The illegal shipment was reported as coming from Nha Trang in Vietnam.

According to SODC, for the entire year of 2003 and the first three months of 2004, there were 19 counternarcotics visits to and 10 from Vietnam. Vietnam has existing counternarcotics MOUs with the PRC, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Hungary, Russia, and the United States. In June 2003, Vietnam hosted the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and Counterterrorism as well

as separate SOMTC+EU, SOMTC+China, SOMTC+3, and SOMTC+US sessions. The meetings included a discussion on regional drug issues. Specifically, the Burmese delegation discussed the need for an enhanced regional approach. According to DEA, there is no evidence that the attendance of GVN law enforcement officials at regional or international fora has led to enhanced cooperation, however.

17. (U) Continued eradication of domestic illicit poppy cultivation and support of crop-substitution projects to eliminate it completely:

--The USG officially estimates that there are about 2,300 hectares of opium poppy under cultivation in Vietnam. However, there has not been a satellite-based opium yield survey since 2000. This estimate is considered high by the GVN, UNODC, and law enforcement sources. SODC reported that in 2003 local authorities found and eradicated 102,061 hectares of poppy in nine provinces in the north and central regions, including Bac Kan, Cao Bang, Ha Giang, Lao Cai, Lang Son, Lai Chau, Son La, Nghe An, and Thanh Hoa. SODC's Colonel Bien confirmed that "when we find poppy cultivation, we eradicate it." SODC reported that 97 percent of Vietnam's entire area of poppy cultivation has been eradicated. Based on numerous provincial visits by embassy officers, there appears to be a sincere effort to eradicate poppy, when found. However, GVN officials have admitted that complete eradication is unrealistic, given the remoteness of mountainous areas in the northwest and extreme poverty among ethnic minority populations who still use opium for medicinal purposes. Regrowth in remote areas, particularly in the northwest, remains a small, but apparently persistent problem, as does limited cannabis growth in areas near the Cambodian border;

--Regarding crop substitution, there is a major UNODC project (with significant USG support) ongoing in the Ky Son district of Nghe An province, one of the drug "hotspots" in northern Vietnam (ref E). This project, currently in its second phase, includes a crop substitution/alternative development component, where various types of fruit trees and other enterprises, such as bee raising, have been implemented in areas formerly dedicated to poppy. UNODC's Buddenberg viewed the first phase as "successful," with an increase in agricultural production and corresponding drop in drug activity. Based on an embassy monitoring visit in April 2003, there has been progress in the livestock and agricultural models (the focus of USG assistance); however, the selection process of those receiving project assistance was not clear, a problem that UNODC is now addressing. A similar project planned in Son La province, another drug area along the Lao border, will not proceed. Prior to the proposed project signing, the GVN requested an alternate project location and more autonomy in administering the project. UNODC declined to meet the GVN's demands; after deliberation, UNODC decided not to proceed;

--In addition to Ky Son, the GVN's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) has continued to support projects in various provinces. The GVN, through MARD, independently supports crop substitution projects in other provinces, including Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, Ha Giang, Cao Bang, and Lang Son. The GVN has tasked MARD to develop a national crop substitution proposal to include in the GVN's 2006-2010 Master Plan. To avoid indirectly encouraging poppy cultivation through subsidies for eradication, the GVN has placed all crop substitution subsidies under national programs to alleviate poverty in poor, mountainous regions.

18. (U) Continued focus on creating a legal framework to address money laundering and other forms of financial crimes:

--At present, money laundering is not considered a major issue in Vietnam because of the state-controlled banking system and high transaction costs. However, partly due to the international emphasis on terrorist financing, over the last year there has been a growing awareness and concern among State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) officials on the issue of money laundering and financial crimes in general. SBV officials have begun to work with the U.S., the IMF, and other donors to identify and address weaknesses in their banking system. However, without major reform (including greater transparency), it will be difficult to introduce sufficient safeguards. According to a 2003 UNODC report, "Vietnam is obviously ill equipped to fight the escalation in financial crimes unfolding in most of Southeast Asia." While the State licenses wholly foreign-owned and joint venture state-private banks to operate alongside the State commercial banks, their market penetration and asset base are small. Foreign exchange currency controls for private and joint venture banks are considered to be strict. However, the banking system in Vietnam is segmented and lacks real, transparent, and easily verifiable controls. Although banks are under the supervision of the State Bank, that supervision is minimal. Vietnam is in the process of



implementing banking reform as part of their World Bank and IMF loans, and some of that reform is relevant to these issues (increased transparency, more effective regulation, and overall stability of the banking system). It will be critical that reform of the banking system is accompanied by law enforcement training regarding financial crimes;

--There is currently no specific law in Vietnam regarding money laundering, although it is mentioned in the comprehensive counternarcotics law very generally, but internal discussion has begun on the need to draft specific regulations on this issue. According to UNODC, the GVN is aware of the potential problem and "trying to take preventive measures" such as inviting international experts and participating in ILEA training. To that end, post had lined up several appropriate State Bank officials to attend ILEA-sponsored training on financial crimes in May 2003; unfortunately, Vietnam's participation in the course was cancelled by ILEA due to SARS.

19. (U) Increasing efforts to support drug awareness and prevention, demand reduction, and treatment of drug users and addicts:

-- The GVN views drug awareness and prevention as a significant objective in its fight against drugs as well as an integral part of its efforts to comply fully with the 1988 UN Drug Convention. The GVN has continued a steady drumbeat of anti-drug propaganda, culminating in a drug awareness week every June. During the week, youth and mass organizations engage in various activities to spread the anti-drug message. These include art contests, speeches, and meetings. In a December 2003 event, Vietnam Radio Corporation and SODC organized a ceremony to award prizes to the winners of the "anti-drug soap opera writing competition" for transmission on the Voice of Vietnam's radio program. Currently, SODC is helping with another contest titled "The Entire Nation Unites To Prevent and Combat Drug Crimes." Also, in the past year, state-controlled television has begun a weekly program called "SOS Drugs" and has been airing a series of anti-heroin spots. According to the UNODC's Buddenberg, Vietnam and UNODC will be signing an agreement to implement a demand reduction project (supported mainly by Italy) "within the next few months";

-- By the end of 2003, official GVN statistics reported 160,700 registered addicts, although the UN and other agencies suspect the actual number is substantially higher. According to Nguyen Vi Hung, Director of Hanoi Department for Social Evils Prevention, by March 2003 there were 13,736 drug users in Hanoi. However, it was estimated that approximately 2,000 drug users in the capital city had not been identified or registered. That official figure is 11 percent higher than 2002. The Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) is the GVN ministry tasked with providing drug treatment services. Since 2001, emboffs have visited most drug treatment centers in northern Vietnam as well as some in the south (ref F). According to SODC, there are now more than 100 big and small centers at the provincial level, which have a capacity of between 100 to 1,000 addicts each. There are also 700 centers at lower levels. Provincial authorities run most centers, but some are supported by mass organizations, such as the Youth Union. Drug treatment centers range from the most basic to almost resort-like. Most suffer from a lack of physical and material resources. The addict population is a combination of those who enter voluntarily and others who are undergoing "compulsory" treatment. Drug treatment, as with other public sector services in Vietnam, suffers from a lack of resources. However, the GVN has continued efforts to expand drug treatment in 2004. According to SODC, of 160,700 addicts, approximately 36,478 had been assigned "compulsory" treatment;

--According to MOLISA's Dr. Sac, only a few drug treatment centers, most of which are in the South, experienced escapes, likely due in part to a 2002 GVN decree that mandated minimum stays of one year. No such escapes have been reported in 2003, however. Vocational training in the centers is uneven, ranging from good to nonexistent. Lack of resources has had a negative impact on the GVN's plan to improve drug treatment in one of Vietnam's "hotspot" provinces, Nghe An. Opening of a 700-bed center is the ultimate goal of this province, but due to funding constraints, this has been delayed, according to Dr. Sac. Presently, there are "only about 160 addicts" staying in the partially completed facility, he added;

--In addition to drug treatment centers, those with less severe addictions may be treated under a community-based treatment scheme (ref G). Despite apparently good intentions, it appears that implementation is rather thin and uneven, with "peer pressure" the main component of treatment following detoxification. Community-based treatment nonetheless at least provides addicts with a

supportive infrastructure (and limited vocational training) that would otherwise not be available;

--During its June 2003 session, the National Assembly approved a five-year pilot project on post-treatment vocational training and employment developed by the HCMC People's Committee. Nguyen Minh Triet, Chairman of Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee and CPV Politburo member, said "I would bet my political career on the success of this program." The one to three year program is compulsory for those judged at high risk for returning to drugs. It is voluntary for others who have finished their compulsory treatment and judged less at risk. According to Nguyen Hoang Mai of the National Assembly's Social Affairs Committee, the goal of the program is to try to reduce the relapse rate (generally estimated at about 85 percent, similar to western countries) by providing recovering addicts with skills that will enable them to assume "productive lives after treatment." The pilot project is now underway in HCMC. Le Thanh Hai, Chairman of HCMC People's Committee, pointed out that vocational training and employment opportunities for addicts is among eight major issues to be "definitely solved" in 2004. As a result of the project, 200 former drug users who have completed drug rehabilitation and vocational training have started work at a plastics production factory which opened on April 20 in HCMC's Cu Chi District. As part of the effort, more than 50 enterprises in HCMC have invested about USD 3 million to provide vocational training and jobs to over 10,000 drug addicts who are now undergoing treatment at the city's treatment centers. To encourage businesses to employ recovering addicts, Nguyen Thanh Tai, Vice Chairman of the HCMC People's Committee, suggested preferential policies for the businesses and enterprises. The enterprises will receive preferential allocation of land, workshop building, operational funds and other benefits such as subsidy support to vocational training, simple and fast investment procedures, and lower transportation costs. In March 2004, the Youth Brigade held a ground-breaking ceremony at Nhi Xuan industrial park in Hoc Mon district, HCMC. According to the plan, the park will provide jobs to 10,000 workers, of whom between 5,000 and 6,000 are former addicts. Under this program, factories and enterprises will employ about 14,000 recovering addicts by the end of 2004.

10. (U) With a narcotics agreement signed between the United States and Vietnam, closer counternarcotics cooperation in the form of training and assistance to Vietnam is expected to improve in the time ahead, especially once the two countries begin implementation of the projects. BURGHARDT